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## CHINA-VN-USSR TRIANGLE &amp; US POLICY

## I. Assess each in relation to Indochina situation

## A. Vietnam

- Big losers - Viewed as aggressors in Kampuchea
- "hegemonists" thruout Indochina
- over-extended militarily
- distress economically
- regarded by ASEAN as threat
- Set VN back: Sov. can't be counted on totally

## B. Soviet Union

- Sov. may conclude after recent events advisable to put some distance between them & VN
- did receive some credit, esp. in Eur.; Eur. feels Sov behaved correctly

## 1. avoided direct involvement

- but in Asian eyes suffered net minus

## 1. in ties w/VN - failing to provide sufficient aid

## 2. naval &amp; air presence unwelcome

## C. China

Must view as net plus - primary objective

## 1. In attacking VN gained limited pol. &amp; mil. objectives

- signaled intent

- a. so doing, skillfully controlled their risks
- b. pol. objectives transcended scope of mil. objectives

- whether mil. performance restrained entirely because of limited objectives or because of heavy casualties unclear

- showed VN, China attack cannot be discounted

## 2. Dispelled image of China as "paper tiger"

- Especially in ASEAN, Sov. backed down before PRC challenge
- VN not as big a threat as thought
- China initially criticized for attacking but after w/drawal criticism reduced

-succeeded in short term

30,000 VN troops w/drawn

## II. Short-term policies

None prepared to accept puppet gov't

### A. Vietnam

1. Continue stepping up military effort against Kampuchea in conjunction with force moves to North

(Kam-VN Mil Force  
Map)

a. VN continued movement of forces to north  
100-150,000 in Hanoi-border area now  
vice 70,000 in Dec.

b. Continued mobilization

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Econ. cost noted [REDACTED] pressing Sov. for material assistance

c. 25 Mar began Sov airlift of multi-division force to west/southwest Kampuchea

-Scratch divisions with lot recruits & conglomeration of misc. units

-Considerable gamble; VN already down road of getting bogged down in guerrilla war

-This could involve Sov reputation since ID w/VN but Sov. dilemma, no other alternative

2. VN-USSR

-VN unlikely to want "big brother" relationship w/Sov

-try to restrict physical Sov presence, e.g. via base rights

3. VN-Beijing

-Preempt another attack w/negot.

-Wants to go into negotiations with best strength

-Avoid overcommitment w/Soviets

-Appeases ASEAN, & elsewhere

4. VN-others?

Possibly Japan - supplement Sov. aid

Put itself in better light with Asian & West

### B. China

1. Will maintain mil. forces along VN border by large margin

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 (Mil. Forces along Sino-VN Border Map)

- Still retain 400,000 troops
  - Ties down VN main forces
  - Sustain Kampuchean resistance
  - Stir-up resistance in Laos
  - Undoubtedly to maximize mil. & econ. strain on VN.
2. Negotiations will allow injection of issues of Kampuchea & Laos
    - Keep world focused on Kampuchea
  3. Explore ways to activate Sihanouk in "united front"
    - Will mean pushing Pol Pot into background but he is effective resistance leader, how will it go w/o him?
    - Appears to be hanging on but VN stepping up pressure

### III. Longer term outlook

Much depends on how well Kampuchea resistance holds up

If standoff in Kampuchea will make talks more meaningful

Everyone may be amenable to some compromise formula

#### A. Vietnam

1. If difficulties increase may modify Kampuchean policy - Accept something less than originally desired
  - like recent backoff of demands prior to negotiations
  - may settle for "united front" w/other elements besides Heng Samrin
2. Could turn to Soviets but unlikely; contrary to strong VN nationalism

#### B. Soviets

1. Probably reduce ID w/VN therefore also may be
  - willing to accept "coalition gov't"; may help move VN to political settlement
  - may accept Sihanouk if removed from Beijing (Kriangsak report on shift)
  - cautious in mil. presence, ships not permanent in Cam Ranh Bay
2. Strengthen position vis-a-vis Beijing independently of VN i.e., Sino-Soviet border
3. How concerned are Sov at recouping any loss of image? can't jeopardize bilateral situation w/US

#### C. China

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1. Drive VN into greater dependence on Sov

- lead to tension & resentment
- turn VN into more balanced course

2. How much more confidence does Deng feel

- So far, more or less cautious

IV. Next stage & relationship to US policy

A. Most desirable both for Asia & US: neutralize Kampuchea

Reduce threat of VN

- want stable, peaceful region
- remove VN as servant of Soviet interests

B. VN must realize ambitious objectives not realized -  
Accept something less

C. US leverage

- urge non-Communist donors to cut economic aid to VN
- bolster ASEAN
- keep Kampuchean issue alive e.g. UN
- International conference called on settlement?

D R A F T

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*April 17*

China-VN-USSR Triangle and US Policy

I. Might begin by assessing how each protagonist stands in relation to Indochina situation.

a. Vietnam

-- Vietnamese are the big losers. They are accepted as aggressors in Kampuchea; "hegemonists" throughout Indochina; find themselves over-extended militarily and in near-distress economically. Every ASEAN country regards them as principal threat to individual and regional stability.

b. Soviet Union

-- Although Sovs receive some credit, esp. in Europe, for avoiding direct involvement in Sino-VN fighting and hence threatening detente, they suffer in Asian eyes both from close identification with Vietnam and failing to provide sufficient aid to their Vietnamese ally. Their naval and air presence in Vietnam unwelcome to the very Asian countries Sovs are now trying to influence. Chinese charges of Soviet "hegemonism" appear credible.

c. China

-- Chinese gained the limited political and military objections they sought in attacking VN: demonstrating to Asians they are not a "paper tiger", making VN realize

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that Chinese attack cannot be discounted if VN intrudes into Chinese areas of concern, and showing that Soviets cannot be counted upon to fully back up an ally.

-- Chinese may initially have been criticized for attacking VN but effect greatly reduced by Chinese withdrawal.

II. Short-term Policies each country will likely follow

a. Vietnam

-- Vietnamese will probably continue doing what they are doing; continuing and stepping up military effort against Kampuchians, trying to form Indochinese confederation to include Laos, pressing Soviets for material assistance.

-- VN unlikely, however, to want "big brother" relationship with Sovs, and will probably try to restrict physical Soviet presence in VN, e.g., via base rights.

-- VN also moving to complicated and possibly preempt another Chinese attack by opening negotiations with Beijing. Talks also would serve purpose of keeping lines open to Chinese and avoiding over-commitment to Soviet relationship.

-- Some chance VN will attempt to supplement Soviet aid with assistance from other sources, e.g., Japan, and undertake political efforts to put itself in better light with Asian and western countries.

b. China

-- Chinese will maintain military forces along VN border sufficient to outnumber Vietnamese by substantial margin.

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This will tie down VN main forces under threat of another Chinese attack.

-- Beijing will attempt to use talks with VN to inject issues of Kampuchea and Laos, and particularly keep world attention focused on VN occupation of Kampuchea.

-- Concurrently Chinese will do everything they can to sustain Kampuchean resistance and may also attempt to stir up resistance forces in Laos. Purpose will be to maximize military and economic strains on VN.

-- Chinese army also explore ways to activate Sihanouk in Kampuchean "united front", which will necessitate eliminating Pol Pot or at least pushing him into background.

### III. Longer-term Outlook

#### a. Vietnam

-- Possibility exists that if Kampuchea continues to be running sore for Hanoi and difficulties increase elsewhere such as in Laos, VN may modify its Kampuchean policy and accept something less than it originally desired, for example a "united front" which might contain other elements besides Heng Samrin.

-- They might also turn more closely to Soviets, but this would have disadvantage of making VN appear to be a Soviet puppet and would be contradictory to strong Vietnamese nationalism.

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b. Soviets

-- Soviets aware that they are criticized for supporting VN (even India is against VN invasion of Kampuchea) and downgrading role of ASEAN. Kriangsak's Moscow visit may have strengthened this perception. They may thus wish to reduce somewhat their close identification with VN.

-- To this end they may be willing to support a "coalition government" in Kampuchea even before Hanoi does, and accept Sihanouk in it if he can be removed from Beijing. (There are hints of such a shift in Kriangsak's report to Abramowitz of his Moscow visit.)

-- The Soviets may in addition act cautiously in displaying their military presence in VN.

-- Sovs may well want to move VN toward a political settlement (favorable, of course, to Hanoi) but must act cautiously so as not to compromise relationship with Hanoi.

IV. Development of Next Stage and Relationship to U.S. Policy

a. Most desirable outcome of situation from standpoint of VN's Asian neighbors would be neutralized Kampuchea and a VN which was neither an active threat to their stability nor a servant of Soviet interests. Such an outcome would also serve U.S. purposes.

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b. Way to get there would be for VN to realize that its most ambitious objectives cannot be realized, and accept something less. U.S. can help by:

-- Continuing to urge potential non-Communist aid donors to cut back on economic assistance to Vietnam. (There are those such as Japan who might argue that their aid would help to keep VN from turning entirely to the Soviets and preserve some degree of non-Communist influence on Hanoi's policy. History would argue, though, that any help to VN would only serve to make it believe that it will eventually get what it wants if it waits long enough--this is the route which Hanoi has followed successfully in the past.)

-- Bolstering the will and capability of the ASEAN countries to continue to stand up against Soviet and Vietnamese pressures.

-- Keeping the Kampuchean issue before world attention in the UN and in other convenient arenas.

## VN-PRC-USSR

(Map)

## I. Phase I - hostilities over

- Pause?
- New phase?

## II. PRC Perspective

## A. "Taught lesson"?

- Not so positive as to withdraw 420,000/800

## B. Took Soviet maneuvers with equanimity

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## C. Hope:

1. Isolate VN
2. Keep stretched thin
  - Mil - Kampuchea pressure
  - Econ - hard pressed
3. Bring to accommodation - distancing from Soviets

## III. VN Perspective

## A. Mobilization - redeployment - reinforcement

- 50,000-100,000 in north
- Conscripts to Kampuchea

## B. Hardline on negotiations

- Disputed territory
- Includes areas in Chinese hands for 30 years

## C. Persisted in Indo-China federation

## D. Introduced Laos into equation

- Opened up probability of extension

## E. Not going appear have been taught

- Driven into Soviet hands

## IV. Sov perspective

## A. Gaining greater foothold in VN

- Bases?
- VN resistance

(Map)

## B. No attack in North

## V. Net

## A. Renewal of hostilities?

(Map)

- B. Continued Kampuchea war
  - 1. Coalition, Sihanouk solution?
    - Can't get rid Pol Pot
  - 2. Resupply?
    - Continued Thai commitment
- C. Long term effort erode VN in Laos & Kampuchea
  - Isolate internationally

I Phase I - hostilities over  
 Pause?  
 New phase?

II PRC perspective

"Taught lesson"?

Not so positive as to withdraw 420,000/500

Took for maneuvers w/ eagerness

25X1D

Hope:

Isolate VN

Keep stretched thin

Mil - Kampuchea pressure

Econ -

Bury to accommodation - distancing  
 from Sore

II VN Perspective

Mobilization - redeployment - reinforcement

50,000 - 100,000 in north

Concepts to Kamp

Hardline on negotiations

Disputed territory

Includes areas in Chinese  
 hands for 30 years

Proposed in Indo China Federation

Introduced loss into negotiations

Opened up probably pretension

Not going again have been taught  
Driven into Sov hands

III Sov perspective

Gaining greater foothold in VN  
Bases?  
VN resistance

No attack in North

IV Not Renewal of hostilities? (see Viet. de-  
escalation steps  
very possible)

Continued Kamp war  
Coalition, Sihanouk solution?  
Can't get rid Pol Pot

Resupply?  
Cont'd Thai commitment

Long term effort erode VN in Laos & Kamp  
Isolate interationally

Can PRC sustain 400000 men force  
in area?

(Sorce: Many of those forces had originally  
been there during the Vietnam-US war,  
& had been moved away, subsequently)